

September 25, 2009: Congressman Wittman Statement on Terrorist Plot on U.S. Marine Corps Base - Quantico

WASHINGTON, DC - On Thursday, prosecutors in North Carolina revealed as part of a new indictment of two men arrested this past month that the individuals had been plotting an attack upon the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, VA. The men have been charged with "conspiring to murder U.S. military personnel" in connection with the planned assault on the Marine Corps base" according to the article. Additionally, the men had undertaken reconnaissance and had obtained maps of the base to plan their attack.

"Now more than ever we must remain vigilant in our resolve to combat terrorism on our shores and around the globe. We are fortunate to have law enforcement and intelligence officials working day and night to protect our citizens from those who seek to do us harm. However, our enemies remain committed to targeting our citizens and service members. These arrests highlight my continued call that Marine Corps Base Quantico not be used to house Guantanamo Bay detainees or any suspects at terror trials. This installation is already being targeted because of the presence of military personnel, let alone the added value of fellow terrorists. I remain committed against the move of detainees to Quantico, the Commonwealth, and our Nation."

The article released by Reuters News Service follows below.

U.S. terror suspects accused of targeting Marine base

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RALEIGH, North Carolina (Reuters) - Two men charged in North Carolina last month with plotting terrorist attacks overseas also planned to attack the U.S. Marine Corps base in Quantico, Virginia, authorities said on Thursday.

The two were among seven suspects arrested in August for conspiring to provide material support to terrorists and for conspiracy to murder, kidnap, maim and injure people overseas.

A new indictment unveiled on Thursday charged Daniel Patrick Boyd, the group's alleged ringleader, and Hysen Sherifi "with conspiring to murder U.S. military personnel" in connection with the planned assault on the Marine Corps base, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Raleigh said in a statement.

It offered no details, except to say that Boyd had undertaken reconnaissance of Quantico and obtained maps of the base in order to plan the attack.

The U.S. Attorney's Office said Boyd also possessed armor piercing ammunition, and had stated that it was "to attack the Americans."

"These additional charges hammer home the grim reality that today's home-grown terrorists are not limiting their violent plans to locations overseas, but instead are willing to set their sights on American citizens and American targets, right here at home," U.S. Attorney George E.B. Holding said.

All seven suspects in the North Carolina case were denied bail after a hearing in Raleigh last month at which prosecutors played FBI recordings as evidence that they had discussed waging "jihad" as part of a conspiracy to conduct attacks in foreign nations.

The United States has been on heightened security alert since the September 11 attacks in 2001 and authorities have publicized efforts to crush domestic terrorist cells before they have a chance to act.

Prosecutors have said Boyd trained in terrorist camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan from 1989 to 1992, and fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Boyd is a U.S. citizen and Sherifi is a native of Kosovo and a legal permanent resident of the United States.

(Reporting by Tom Brown; Editing by Pascal Fletcher and Jackie Frank)

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.